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KENNEDY VIEWS  
ON CUBA AIREDPresident Was Skeptical Of  
Invasion, Schlesinger Says~~When the secretary was released by  
the Department of Defense, he was  
in the hands of the press.~~

New York, July 18 (AP)—The late President John Kennedy was skeptical about the advisability of the 1961 Cuban invasion right up to the moment he gave the final go-ahead; Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., historian and former presidential adviser, said today.

Schlesinger made the statement in the second of a series of excerpts from his forthcoming book, "A Thousand Days: John F. Kennedy in the White House." The excerpts are being published by Life Magazine.

Mr. Kennedy first heard about the Cuban invasion plans from Allen Dulles, Central Intelligence Agency director, twelve days after the presidential election, Schlesinger said.

## Plan Far Advanced

At that time, the plan already was far advanced and Mr. Kennedy gave directions for it to proceed, with the understanding that his interest did not mean commitment to the operation.

"He then authorized the CIA to continue on the assumption that the invasion would occur," Schlesinger wrote, "but he . . . added carefully and categorically, that the expedition must be laid on in a way which would make it possible for him to call it off as late as 24 hours before D-day."

Schlesinger said that on March 28, 1961, he asked Mr. Kennedy what he thought of the invasion. "I think about it as little as possible," he said the President replied.

The historian added, "In his judgment, the critical point—the weak part of the case for going ahead—lay in the theory that the landings would touch off a mass insurrection against the regime of Cuban Premier Fidel Castro. The President, it seemed to me, was growing steadily more skeptical as his hard questioning exposed one problem after another in the plans."

## Machinery Set in Motion

But Schlesinger said the initial go-ahead set in motion diplomatic and military machinery Mr. Kennedy later found it impossible to fully control.

Schlesinger wrote that Federal secrecy surrounding the invasion kept some Government experts from giving sound advice on the ill-fated project to Mr. Kennedy.

Schlesinger noted that, in the weeks that followed the briefing, the Government "floated as in a void."

"Neither the outgoing nor the incoming administrations wanted to make fundamental decisions," the historian added, "and most matters continued to move along existing tracks."

Dulles, Schlesinger said, was not able to provide the President with any good, analytic advice because he was so personally involved in the plan.

And, he indicated, some who might have given sound advice—such as Robert Amory, Jr., deputy director of the CIA for intelligence—were not informed of the operation.

## "Idiotic Effect"

"The need-to-know standard, i.e., that no one should be told about the project unless it became operationally necessary, had the idiotic effect of excluding much of the expertise of Government at a time when every alert newspaper man knew something was afoot," Schlesinger wrote.

He also said that Mr. Kennedy was never shown a memorandum strongly opposing the plan written by Chester Bowles, then Under Secretary of State.

Schlesinger said Mr. Kennedy was forced to rely on advisers with whom he was not familiar, particularly the "entrenched" military and intelligence personnel who were unanimous in their approval of the proposed Bay of Pigs amphibious attack plan.

## Nothing More Depressing

"Dulles and Richard M. Bissell, Jr., also of the CIA, accepted progressive modifications (in the plan) so long as the expedition in some form remained; perhaps they unconsciously supposed that once the operation began to unfold, it would not be permitted to fail," Schlesinger said.

"Nothing had been more depressing . . . than to watch a collection of officials prepare to sacrifice the world's growing faith in the new American President in order to defend interests and pursue objectives of their own."

Schlesinger reported Mr. Kennedy as remarking, "If someone comes in to tell me this or that about the minimum wage bill, I will not hesitate on overruling them. But you always assume that the military and intelligence people have some secret skill not available to ordinary mortals."

## Deeply Disturbed

Part of the determination to keep the scheme alive, Schlesinger said, sprang from the embarrassment of calling it off. Even if the Cuban brigade were successfully disbanded, its members would disperse, disappointed and resentful, all over Latin America.

Confronted by this argument, the President gave his okay to the invasion with the stipulation

that there be "no United States military intervention," a stipulation to which no one involved made any objection, the historian reported.

When the mission began to falter, Schlesinger added, some

people argued that the United States should commit forces saying United States prestige would suffer if the rebellion died.

The President was deeply disturbed by the failure, Schlesinger wrote.

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